

THE ASM AND BIOLOGICAL WARFARE:

A Brief Chronology

13 April 1942

1 October 1943

The ASM's "War Committee on Bacteriology" is formed

A report of this date indicates that a program of activities was drawn up to cover several areas, including:

"Bacteriological warfare and effect of warfare upon essential bacterial processes (gas warfare and soil bacteria).

(This is the only reference to biological warfare in our records of this committee)

①, ①A 15 May 1947

A resolution was introduced from the floor of the General Business Meeting, calling for the international control of biological weapons. This was referred to an ad hoc committee to see if it should be released as coming from the society; there appears to have been no further action.

② (July, 1947)

(4th International Congress of Microbiology passes a resolution condemning biological warfare.)

(1947)

(There may have been a secret technical committee on biological warfare formed during this year. The few cryptic references in the records make it unclear whether or not it was an ASM Committee.)

③ April, 1951

Ad Hoc Committee on Biological Warfare formed.

④ May, 1951

This committee reports as the "Committee on Information Concerning Civil Defense against Biological Warfare." They also publish a resolution in the Aug., 1951 Newsletter.

⑤, ⑥ 8 June 1952

ASM officials began to prepare a response to a published letter from M. Frederic Joliot-Curie, who accused the U.S. of using biological weapons in Korea. The response was to stress technical, not moral issues. It is unclear whether the response was ever sent.

⑦, ⑧, ⑨ 1955

Advisory Committee to the Chemical Corps (Fort Detrick) established. (The name of this committee changes frequently over the following years, as the structure of command at Ft. Detrick changes.)

↓ 7 April 1967

Northern California Branch requests information on why the Ft. Detrick committee exists, and what are its purposes.

⑩, ⑪ May, 1967

A motion from the floor at the annual meeting to disband the Ft. Detrick Advisory Committee was defeated.

⑫, ⑬

⑭

Biological Warfare Chronology: continued

15 March 1968

The Advisory Committee to Ft. Detrick recommends that the committee be dissolved. They cite their lack of influence with the command, not ethical or moral grounds.

4 May 1968

Dissolution of the Ft. Detrick Advisory Committee is approved by the CPC. The decision is sustained by the full Council the next day.

8 May 1968

Under urging from Dr. Merrill Snyder, the Business meeting votes that the Advisory Committee should be reinstated.

1 October 1968

Mail vote of the full Council upholds the dissolution.

April. 1970

Two resolutions supporting President Nixon's decision to end America's involvement with biological warfare are passed.

In addition, two representatives from the ASM attend the Conference on Bacteriological Warfare, held as part of the 10th International Congress of Microbiology.

There do not appear to have been any actions by the ASM with regards to Biological Warfare since 1970.